



M/T *Athos I* Delaware River Oil Spill

Responding to oil and hazardous substance releases, NOAA is a one-stop shop for protecting, assessing, and restoring the nation's natural resources. On November 26, 2004, the *Athos I*, a 750-foot tanker, hit submerged objects in the Delaware River near Philadelphia, spilling about 265,000 gallons of crude oil. In the year since the spill, NOAA has –

- Provided scientific support to the U.S. Coast Guard
- Begun assessing natural resource injuries resulting from the spill and planning appropriate restoration activities
- Conducted navigation surveys (which helped identify the object causing the collision)
- Provided weather and oceanographic data
- Provided scientific support for reopening the Salem Nuclear Power Plant

oil caused the closure of the Salem Nuclear Power Plant, the second largest in the U.S.. NOAA is provided field survey and modeling tools for reopening the facility.

Assessing injured resources

NOAA is also a federal natural resource trustee, acting on the public's behalf to protect and restore coastal and marine resources injured by oil and hazardous substance releases. NOAA biologists, toxicologists, and economists are collecting data and conducting studies to determine the full



Athos I oil spill clean up, 2004. NOAA overflight 12/2/2004.

NOAA continues efforts in the region and will also organize and participate in Spring re-assessment surveys that will identify potential further clean-up actions.

Providing cleanup support

NOAA has scientists based in each Coast Guard district to provide scientific support for spills. At the M/T *Athos I*, NOAA provided hazard and shoreline assessments, information on oil behavior and movement, cleanup recommendations, risk communication, and public outreach. Submerged

impact to natural resources and services. NOAA is working cooperatively with co-trustees (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the states of Delaware and New Jersey, and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania) and the responsible party, Tsakos Shipping. To date, NOAA and co-trustees have been assessing the following categories of injuries—



Shorelines (including marshes, beaches, and intertidal mudflats). Of the 420 miles of shoreline that was surveyed, roughly 214 miles were oiled to varying degrees.

Aquatic resources (including subtidal habitat). Bottom-dwelling fish, including shellfish, juvenile fish and larvae, and the federally endangered short-nose sturgeon are at risk of being exposed to submerged oil. The trustees are collecting numerous sediment samples throughout the River to determine the nature and degree of impacts.

Birds/wildlife. By May 2005, 166 birds were collected dead or died at the rehabilitation center and 401 birds rehabilitated and released alive. Other dead wildlife recovered include 5 mammals, 4 reptiles, and 23 fish. Because most oiled, dead birds are unaccounted for at spills the trustees have conducted population assessments and exposure rates to assess the full impact of the spill.

Recreational uses. Fishing, shellfishing, boating, and hunting were also impacted. The trustees are conducting surveys of boaters, fisherman, and hunters to assess the extent of recreational losses.

Restoring natural resources

Once the full range of injuries is identified and quantified, NOAA and partners will develop a plan describing the injured resources and services and the types of restoration projects to address them. Typically, citizens and environmental groups help NOAA, co-trustees, and the responsible party identify, select, and implement on-the-ground restoration.

NOAA in the region

The Athos I is one example of NOAA's work in the region. The map below shows NOAA efforts to repair harm from oil and hazardous substance releases at other sites.

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For additional information, visit our website at

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